

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An article for use as a masking material to mask a gap between two relatively movable parts comprising an elongate strip having at least first and second separate edge forming portions for contacting each of the two parts, a flexible web portion connecting the first and second edge forming portions for hinging movement such that the first and second edge forming portions can move independently of each other, and adhesive on one side of the connecting web portion for attaching the elongate strip to one of the parts such that said one part is contacted by an adhesive free surface of the first edge forming portion and the other part is contacted by the second edge forming portion.
2. An article according to claim 1 wherein the strip can adapt to fill gaps of different size and/or shape by hinging movement of the first and second edge forming portions to contact the two relatively movable parts defining the gap to be masked.
3. An article according to claim 1 wherein the article is made of foam material.
4. An article according to claim 3 wherein the foam material is an open or closed cell polymeric foam.
5. An article according to claim 4 wherein the foam material is a polyurethane foam.
6. An article according to claim 4 wherein the foam material is a polyolefin foam.

7. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion is of reduced thickness relative to at least one of the first and second edge forming portions.

5 8. An article according to claim 7 wherein the connecting web portion and the other edge forming portion are of the same thickness.

9. An article according to claim 7 wherein the connecting web portion is of reduced thickness relative to both first and second edge forming portions.

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10. An article according to claim 9 wherein the first and second edge forming portions have elliptical transverse cross-sections.

11. An article according to claim 10 wherein the connecting web portion is
15 located on a major axis of both edge forming portions.

12. An article according to claim 10 wherein the connecting web portion is tangential to both edge forming portions.

20 13. An article according to claim 10 wherein the connecting web portion is located on a major axis of one of the first and second edge forming portions and is tangential to the other edge forming portion.

25 14. An article according to claim 10 wherein the first and second edge forming portions have the same transverse cross-sections.

15. An article according to claim 10 wherein the first and second edge forming portions have different transverse cross-sections.

16. An article according to claim 1 wherein the second edge forming portions is connected to a third edge forming portion by a second connecting web portion.

5 17. An article according to claim 16 wherein the second edge forming portion has a larger transverse cross-section than each of the first and third edge forming portions.

18. An article according to claim 17 wherein each of the first and third edge
10 forming portions have the same transverse cross-section.

19. An article according to claim 17 wherein each of the first and third edge forming portions have different transverse cross-sections.

15 20. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has a width transverse to the length of the strip and is of uniform thickness across the width.

21. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has
20 a width transverse to the length of the strip and is of variable thickness across the width.

22. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has a smooth surface.

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23. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has a patterned surface.

24. An article according to claim 23 wherein the connecting web portion has
30 a ribbed surface.

25. An article according to claim 24 wherein the ribs extend in the direction of the length of the elongate strip.

26. An article according to claim 24 wherein the ribs extend transversely to the length of the elongate strip.

27. An article according to claim 24 wherein the ribs extend at an angle of less than 90 degrees to the length of the elongate strip.

28. An article according to claim 1 wherein the adhesive is a pressure sensitive adhesive.

29. An article according to claim 1 wherein the adhesive is applied to the connecting web portion as a stripe extending lengthwise of the elongate strip.

30. An article according to claim 29 wherein the stripe is continuous.

31. An article according to claim 29 wherein the stripe is discontinuous.

32. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has a width transverse to the length of the strip and the adhesive extends across the full width of the connecting web portion.

33. An article according to claim 1 wherein the connecting web portion has a width transverse to the length of the strip and the adhesive extends partially across the width of the connecting web portion.

34. An article according to claim 1 wherein a single stripe of adhesive is applied to the connecting web portion and to at least one edge forming portion.

35. An article according to claim 1 wherein separate adhesive stripes are applied to the connecting web portion and to at least one edge forming portion.

36. An article according to claim 1 wherein the adhesive free surface of said one edge forming portion is provided by an adhesive free region extending lengthwise of the elongate strip.

37. An article according to claim 36 wherein said adhesive free region has a width transverse to the length of the strip of at least 2mm.

38. An article according to claim 1 wherein the article comprises a polymer material.

39. An article according to claim 38 wherein the polymer is an elastomer.

40. An article according to claim 38 wherein the polymer is a thermoplastic.

41. An article according to claim 1 wherein the polymer is non-woven.

42. An article according to claim 1 wherein the article is made by extrusion.

43. An article according to claim 1 wherein the article is made by casting or moulding.

44. An article according to claim 1 wherein the article is made by compression of material from which the article is made.

45. An article according to claim 1 wherein at least one of the first and second edge forming portions is hollow.

46. An article according to claim 1 wherein both edge forming portions are hollow.

47. An article according to claim 1 wherein the edge forming portions
5 comprise different materials.

48. An elongate foam strip for use as a masking material to mask a gap between two relatively movable parts, the foam strip having an adhesive stripe for releasably securing the foam strip to one of the parts to close temporarily
10 the gap, the foam strip having a first longitudinal edge forming portion with an adhesive free surface for contacting the part to which the strip is secured by the adhesive stripe and a second longitudinal edge forming portion for contacting the other part, and a web portion connecting the first and second edge forming portions and being of reduced thickness relative to at least one of the edge
15 forming portions whereby the first and second edge forming portions are movable independently of each other.

49. A method of making a masking material comprising providing a sheet of polymer material, applying pressure to the sheet at first and second laterally
20 spaced positions to form first and second longitudinally extending seams between upper and lower surfaces of the sheet, and applying pressure to the sheet to compress partially a portion of the sheet between the first and second seams to form a flexible web portion of reduced thickness relative to the remaining portion of the sheet between the first and second seams.

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50. A method according to claim 49 wherein the sheet is separable along the seams to form an elongate strip in which the flexible web portion connects first and second edge forming portions.

30 51. A method according to claim 49 wherein adhesive is applied to the connecting web portion between the first and second seams for releasably

securing the elongate strip to mask temporarily a gap between two relatively movable parts.

52. A method according to claim 51 wherein the adhesive is applied as a longitudinal stripe to the flexible connecting web portion.

53. A method according to claim 49 wherein the sheet comprises a plurality of elongate strips releasably secured together along adjoining side edges by separable longitudinal seams.

54. A method according to claim 49 wherein a surface pattern is applied to the connecting web portion on at least one side.

55. A method according to claim 54 wherein the surface pattern comprises a series of ribs to alter the stiffness, strength or flexibility of the connecting web portion.

56. A method according to claim 54 wherein the surface pattern is designed to relieve stress.

57. A method according to claim 49 wherein the polymer material is a foam material.

58. A method according to claim 49 wherein the polymer material is a non-woven material.

59. An elongate strip of masking material made by the method according to claim 49.

60. An apparatus for manufacturing a masking material comprising means for forming first and second seams between upper and lower surfaces of a sheet

of polymer material, said seams being laterally spaced apart, and means for partially compressing a portion of said sheet between the seams to form a flexible portion of reduced thickness, wherein said sheet is separable along said seams to form an elongate strip having said flexible portion joined along at least one edge to a portion of increased thickness.

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